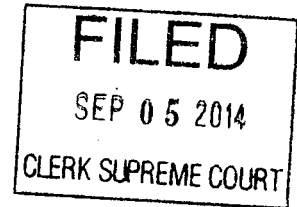


In the Supreme Court of Iowa

**In the Matter of
Proposed Amendments
to Iowa's Bar Admission
Process**

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Order



In December 2013, The Iowa State Bar Association submitted its Report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Legal Education and Licensure (report). The report contained the following four recommendations:

Recommendation One: Create an alternative for admission to the practice of law in Iowa absent examination for qualified graduates of Iowa law schools. This proposal would create a "diploma privilege" for qualified graduates of Drake and Iowa law schools.

Recommendation Two: Extend the comprehensive character and fitness screenings to applicants who would be admitted absent examination.

Recommendation Three: Adopt the Uniform Bar Examination for applicants who would not qualify under the diploma privilege.

Recommendation Four: Investigate alternatives to the Iowa Basic Skills Course for applicants who would not qualify under the diploma privilege.

In response to the report, the court provided a ninety-day period for the public to submit written comments and held a public hearing on August 27, 2014. At least 155 written comments were submitted to the court. At the public hearing, twenty-five witnesses presented information on the diploma privilege proposal and made arguments for and against the recommendations. The court extends its deep appreciation to each person who submitted a written comment on the recommendations and to those persons who presented at the public hearing. The court is also very grateful for the thoughtful work of the blue ribbon committee and the interest of The Iowa State Bar Association in the administration of the practice of law in Iowa.

Having now fully and carefully considered the recommendations, public comments, and information presented at the public hearing, the court

concludes a diploma privilege should not be adopted. Therefore, the court will take no action at this time on recommendations one and two contained in the report.

The court further concludes that the current process for admission of lawyers by examination should be carefully studied, with the goal of achieving greater efficiency, expedition, economy, and utility for the applicants for admission. Accordingly, the court requests that the Iowa Board of Law Examiners research, study, and submit a report to the court not later than March 31, 2015 with a recommendation regarding each of the following topics:

1. Whether the Uniform Bar Examination should be adopted in Iowa, and, if so, the process that should be followed.
2. Whether law students should be allowed to apply for and sit for the bar examination in February of their third year of law school.
3. Whether other adjustments or changes in the bar admission process should be considered.

The court is also cognizant of the concerns expressed in many of the comments regarding the current requirement for Iowa lawyers to complete an approved Basic Skills Course within one year after admission by examination. In a separate order, the court will be requesting additional public comment on the question of whether the Basic Skills Course requirement for persons admitted to practice law in Iowa after 2014 should be retained, and, if so, whether the course or the requirements of the course should be revised.

Dated this 5th day of September, 2014.

The Supreme Court of Iowa

By 
Mark S. Cady, Chief Justice